

7. The female connector as claimed in claim 6 wherein said holes are distinct from each other and a web of material is included separating said holes from each other.

8. The female connector as claimed in claim 6 wherein said holes are interconnected to each other by a narrow passage extending between said holes.

9. The female connector as claimed in claim 6 wherein each of said holes is substantially triangularly shaped and includes three internal angular corners therein.

10. The female connector as claimed in claim 9 wherein one of the angular corners of each of said holes are in alignment with each other.

11. The female connector as claimed in claim 10 wherein said holes are distinct

from each other and a web of material is included separating said holes from each other.

12. The female connector as claimed in claim 10 wherein said holes are interconnected to each other by a narrow passage extending between said holes.--

REMARKS

The Office Action of August 5, 1999 and the prior art cited therein have been carefully studied and in view of the above changes and the following representations, reconsideration and allowance of this application are most respectfully requested.

Preliminarily, it is noted that the Examiner has raised a number of objections to the drawings. Since these are primarily technical issues that do not go to the merits of the

application, it is most respectfully requested that any requirements for correction be withheld pending an indication of allowable subject matter.

With respect to the merits of the application, the Examiner has rejected previous claims 1, 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the prior French patent to Orplast. This rejection is most strenuously but respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the claims as now presented.

All of the claims now being presented require that the female connector of the invention be substantially round and disc shaped. In addition, all of the claims require that at least one of the holes formed therein be substantially triangularly shaped with one of the corners of the triangle being closer to the other hole than the other corners of the triangle. This is most clearly illustrated in the preferred embodiment of the invention at the right-hand side of Figure 2. Many of the claims also require that both of the holes be substantially triangularly shaped.

Orplast shows none of these features. The device shown in Orplast is an elongated rectangularly shaped element that appears to have fingers 3/4 at its ends and a plurality of openings along its length. Orplast does not show the claimed substantially round disc shaped member. Furthermore, Orplast's openings 5, 6 and 7 are square or rectangularly shaped rather than triangular as shown and claimed by Applicants.

The foregoing distinctions are not merely design choices. Rather, utilizing round disc shaped members allows Applicants' invention to be used for building a larger variety of different shapes and articles than can be made by Orplast. Furthermore, the triangularly shaped



openings somewhat limit the orientation of the fingerless connectors that can be inserted therein, thereby making Applicants' toy more interesting.

Since these features are not shown by Orplast, Applicants submit that the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) must be withdrawn. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in Orplast or elsewhere in the prior art known to Applicants to modify Orplast to include the claimed features. Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention cannot be considered to be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

The remaining references cited by the Examiner but not specifically applied against the claims have also been carefully studied. However, they do not cure the defects of the Orplast reference discussed above. These references neither show nor suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

In view of all of the foregoing, Applicant submits that their application is now in proper condition for allowance and an early action toward that end is most respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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